

Case Opposition in Tagalog¹

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While focusing or topicalization is not so crucial to a general understanding of this paper, yet some knowledge of it is required for a fuller appreciation of some of the points discussed. For an introduction to focus in Tagalog, see Bowen (1965), Otnes (1966), and Schachter and Otnes (1970).

The term case opposition is used in this paper to refer to the potentiality of a surface noun phrase to be interpreted in the deep structure as either of two (or more) cases. Two other terms, verb case and noun case, will be explained. A noun phrase with a verb case is one which enters into a semantic relationship with the verb of the sentence, and a noun phrase with a noun case is one which semantically relates with a noun in the sentence. The underlined NP in (1) is an example of a NP with a verb case; we shall refer to this type of verb case as verb locative--the verb locative tells where the event occurs. In (2) the underlined NP is an example of a noun case, noun locative, since it specifies where the noun bata is when the event occurred.²

- (1) Nahiga sa parke ang bata.
lay park boy
down
'The boy lay down in the park'.
- (2) Ang bata sa parke ay nahiga.
'The boy in the park lay down'.

²A noun locative, derivationally speaking, may be regarded to have started out as a predicate phrase of an ordinary locational sentence, from which as a relative clause, constructions like sa parke of (2) are derived.

This paper deals with some of the syntactic properties of verb and noun cases.

Some surface NPs accommodate two or more deep case interpretations. If a NP can be interpreted in any of two or more verb cases, then the NP exhibits a verb case-verb case opposition (VV). A verb case-noun case opposition (VN) involves the choice of either a verb case or a noun case; and a noun case-noun case opposition (NN), a choice between two noun cases. To illustrate, the NP sa duyan in (3), a verb case since it relates semantically with the verb, may take any of four deep case interpretations: source as in (3a), path (3b), goal (3c), and verb locative (3d).

- (3). Lumundag sa duyan ang bata.
jumped hammock boy

- a. The boy jumped from off the hammock.
- b. The boy jumped over the hammock.
- c. The boy jumped onto the hammock.
- d. The boy jumped on the hammock.

Hence, sa duyan in (3) exhibits a four-way VV. In (4) the NP ng bata can be either a verb case or a noun case, an example of VN.

- (4) Iniampas ang sinturon ng bata.
hit belt boy

- a. The boy hit the belt (against X).
- b. (X) hit the belt of the boy (against Y).

In (4a) the NP ng bata is in the agentive case, and in (4b), in the genitive case.

Sentence (5) illustrates a NN case opposition.

- (5) Ang sinturon sa mesa ng bata ay iniampas.
belt table boy hit

- a. (X) hit the belt on the table of the boy (against Y).
- b. (X) hit the belt of the boy, which (belt) was on the table, (against Y).

where NP ng bata is in the genitive case in both readings, but in each instance differs as to the head noun it modifies, i.e., mesa in (5a) and sinturon in (5b).

Four other case oppositions are illustrated below.

Noun Locative-Dative Case Opposition

- (6) Ipinangsira ni Zeny ang martilyo sa kahon.³
destroy Zeny hammer box

- (6) a. Zeny used the hammer in the box to destroy (X).
 b. Zeny used the hammer to destroy the box.

³Fe Otañes called my attention to the fact that if the N involved, instead of kahon 'box', is kusina 'kitchen', a third reading arises: a noun locative case which takes the N 'Renato' as the target node:

Renato (while he was) in the kitchen used the hammer to destroy (X).

This opposition is accounted for and in fact is a good illustration of the 'blocking effect' discussed in Part 4. The point of the suggestion of course is that case opposition may well be a function not only of the limitations of linear surface structure ordering but also of the semantic properties of some nouns. For another example of a semantically determined opposition, see Footnote 10.

Genitive-Dative Case Opposition

- (7) Pinagkainan niya ang plato ng prutas.
 ate he/she plate
 a. He/she ate (something) from off the plate of the fruit [fruitplate].
 b. He/she ate fruit from off the plate.

Benefactive-Dative Case Opposition

- (8) Inihampas nila si Myrna.
 hit they Myrna
 a. They hit (something) for Myrna.
 b. They hit Myrna (against X).

Agentive-Comitative Case Opposition

- (9) Sinipa kami ni Rey.
 kicked us Rey
 a. Rey kicked us.
 b. (X) kicked us (Rey and me).

In this paper, only the case oppositions found in two ambiguous sentences will be discussed. The sentences are:

(10) Nahulog ang bata sa duyan.
 fell boy hammock

(11) Inihampas ang sinturon ng bata sa mesa.
 hit belt boy table

where (10) has three readings (10a, 10b, 10c), and (11), four readings (11a, 11b, 11c, 11d).⁴

⁴There is a fifth reading, the benefactive reading. See footnote 10.

(10) a. The boy fell onto the hammock.

b. The boy fell from off the hammock.

c. The boy on the hammock fell.

(11) a. The boy hit the belt against the table.

b. The boy on the table hit the belt against (X).

c. (X) hit the belt of the boy against the table.

d. (X) hit the belt of the boy, which (belt) was
 on the table, (against Y).

Part 2

Expressed in Tagalog in unambiguous ways, the three readings of (10) may be written as follows:

(10) d. Nahulog ang bata patungo sa duyan.
 going
 to

e. Nahulog ang bata magmula sa duyan.
 coming
 from

f. Nahulog ang bata na nasa duyan.⁵

⁵It seems that the locative element in the construction na nasa duyan is the second na. It occurs in other locative constructions,

such as: nasaan (na + saan) 'where', narito (na + dito) 'here', nariyan (na + diyan) 'there', na kay 'in the person or possession of'. However, this analysis has some difficulties. While na occurs in NL phrases, it does not occur in VL phrases. It seems attractive to hypothesize that the feature Locative is a property of nouns instead of events (i.e., the person, or object, rather than the event, is what is located), considering that in most occurrences of the sa-phrase as a verb case the phrase can be classified as either source, goal, or path, depending on the verb. Yet sa-phrase, in a few instances, may be used to clearly locate an event. To illustrate:

- (i) Binuntal sa ilong si Renato. (goal)
 punched nose Renato
 Renato was punched in the nose.
- (ii) Binuntal sa parke si Renato. (verb
 Renato was punched (while he was) in locative)
 the park.

Patungo and magmula are motion verbs⁶ functioning as directional

⁶For a discussion of prepositions as motion verbs, see Becker and Arms (1969).

prepositions, and na in (10f) is the relativization marker.

We may now analyze the source of ambiguity of constructions like (10). In all three unambiguous sentences each corresponding to a reading of (10), involved is the recovery of deleted elements, patungo, magmula, na na in (10d), (10e), and (10f), respectively. Thus, we may say that the ambiguity of (10) is caused by the deletion of three different elements, where such a deletion results in the uncertainty of the underlying structure of the truncated constituent. In (10) deletion of the motion verbs occurred after extraposition of the verb complements patungo sa duyan and magmula sa duyan. Extraposition alone, however, does not produce ambiguity, but extraposition and deletion, in our examples, increases the number of cases in opposition from two to three. This point will be made clear. Consider these sentences:

- (12) Nahulog patungo sa duyan ang bata.
- (13) Nahulog sa duyan ang bata.
- (14) Nahulog magmula sa duyan ang bata.
- (15) Nahulog sa duyan ang bata.

Notice that the verb complements have not been extraposed, and that deletion of the motion verbs resulted in the same surface structure (13 and 15). The truncated constituent, sa duyan, now exhibits a two-way ambiguity between the source and goal cases. In (19), however, where both extraposition and deletion occur, a third case, the noun locative, figures in the opposition.

(16) Nahulog ang bata patungo sa duyan.

(17) Nahulog ang bata magmula sa duyan.

(18) Nahulog ang bata na nasa duyan.

(19) Nahulog ang bata sa duyan.

Other than the recovery of deleted elements, another way to make clear the case function of a particular NP is by precise ordering of constituents. We shall call this process reordering. Consider this sequence of sentences:

(20) Nahulog ang bata sa duyan.

(21) Ang bata na nasa duyan ay nahulog.

(22) Ang bata sa duyan ay nanulog.

where in (22), despite the deletion of the elements na na-, the noun locative function of the NP sa duyan is not ambiguous. Notice that in (21) and (22) the subject NP ang bata, together with its complement, has been moved to a pre-predicate position (ay is inserted as a boundary marker between the subject phrase and the predicate phrase). The ordering that resolves the ambiguity is of course not simply the inversion of the predicate-subject order, but the ordering which leaves no doubt that the sa-phrase is a modifier of the subject noun and not of the verb; in other words, that the sa-phrase functions unequivocally as a noun case. It is of course possible to move only the subject NP, leaving behind sa duyan as in (23),

(23) Ang bata ay nahulog sa duyan.

and this as well resolves an ambiguity of sa duyan. The possibility of sa duyan functioning as a noun locative modifying ang bata is eliminated; now sa duyan clearly serves as a complement only of the verb. But, as noted elsewhere in this paper, sa duyan in (23) is still ambiguous as to whether it is source or goal, a VV ambiguity which is by no means resolved by reordering. A third possibility is to move simply the phrase sa duyan to a pre-verbal position in a predicate-subject ordered sentence, as in (24).

(24) Sa duyan nahulog ang bata.

in which the VN case opposition is also resolved. But like (23), this

reordering does not disambiguate the VV case conflict.

The fact that in (23) and (24) sa duyan is still ambiguous, despite the fact that it is clear that the sa-phrase is associated with the verb and not with the noun bata, is a limitation of reordering as a method of disambiguating case oppositions. Reordering does not disambiguate a VV case opposition. This limitation is further illustrated in sentences (12) to (15). In (15) the truncated verb complement, unextraposed to show the node to which it belongs, is still an ambiguous construction.

This shows a major difference between a VV case opposition and a VN case opposition. The ambiguity resulting from the opposition of two verb cases can only be resolved by the recovery of the deleted elements, whenever such a deletion has been made,⁷ but not by reordering.

⁷When no such deletion has occurred, disambiguation requires major syntactic change, which may take the form of a change of focus, or even extensive rewording of the sentence.

This should be evident as a VV ambiguity is brought about not by a question of the proper node with which the NP is to be associated; the ambiguity lies buried deep in the semantic structure of the language. A VN case opposition, however, may be resolved either by element restoration or by reordering, as will be seen.

The VN case opposition in (4) is resolved as a genitive case through restoration of the deleted elements na ari '(which is) owned' as in (25).

(25) Inihampas ang sinturon na ari ng bata.

or by reordering as in (26)

(26) Inihampas ng bata ang sinturon.

which unambiguously makes ng bata in the agentive case. A NN case opposition, on the other hand, may be resolved only by reordering. To illustrate: (27), which restores the deleted elements na ari, is still ambiguous, but (28), which adjoins ng bata to the noun sinturon, although no restoration of deleted elements has been made, is unambiguous.

(27) Ang sinturon sa mesa na ari ng bata ay inihampas.

(28) Ang sinturon ng bata sa mesa ay inihampas.

To summarize the points discussed in this section: If we regard a verb case conflict as resolvable only by restoration and a noun case conflict only by reordering, then we may state as follows the different capacities of noun and verb case oppositions to be disambiguated:

Case Opposition	Disambiguation Potential:	
	<u>Rest.</u>	<u>Reord.</u>
VV	+	-
VN	+	+
NN	-	+

Part 3

Constituent reordering as a method of disambiguating case conflicts, as has been noted, is of limited application, but its nature explained a lot about case opposition processes. Hence, we shall have more to say about it. First, we shall look into the extent of constituent ordering in Tagalog. The sentence

(28) Inihampas ang sinturon ng bata sa mesa.
 1 2 3 4

has four constituents. The left to right ordering of these constituents in sentence construction is very flexible. With four elements, the number of possible arrangements is 2^4 , but 6 of these are ungrammatical since they start with the word ng, a restriction in Tagalog sentence formation. Of the 18 grammatical sentences, 9 are in the inverted order (subject-predicate), hence, the sentence inversion marker ay is inserted between the subject and the predicate.^{8,9}

⁸The currently accepted analysis of ay is that it is the subject-predicate boundary marker. This analysis is not accurate, as these sentences show:

- (i) Sa mesa ay inihampas / ang sinturon ng bata.
 predicate / subject
- (ii) Sa mesa ng bata ay inihampas / ang sinturon.
 predicate / subject

where ay does not separate the subject and the predicate. Rather, it separates two constituents of the predicate phrase. This point does not run counter to the idea of the statement to which this footnote refers, since the terms 'inversion' is redefined in this paper (see

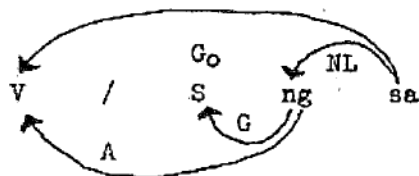
Footnote 12). This analysis of the ay particle is somehow related to Anderson's (1967) view that ay is a minor focusing device.

⁹With ay as the fifth constituent, the number of possible orderings from a permutation of 5 elements is increased to 120. Quite a number of these sentences, however, are ungrammatical. For example, sentences beginning with ay and ng, because of sentence formation constraints in Tagalog, are ungrammatical, and so are sentences ending in ay, and sentences with the ay ng-phrase sequence.

Thirteen of these sentences have ambiguous case relationships.

The first of these ambiguous sentences (29) exhibits a four-way ambiguity, i.e., two instances of case oppositions (genitive-agentive and noun locative-goal). The accompanying diagram, called a case association diagram, shows graphically the case association pattern of an ambiguous sentence.

(29) Iniampas ang sinturon ng bata sa mesa.



In the above diagram, V is verb, S is subject, ng refers to a ng-phrase, sa to a sa-phrase. The cases are Agentive, Genitive, Goal, and Noun Locative. S of course is also a NP, and it does figure in another instance of case opposition, but the reading that this opposition gives, although syntactically well-formed, is semantically unacceptable and therefore will not be discussed here.¹⁰ V and S are

¹⁰The case conflict is between the benefactive and the dative cases. Thus, if we enter this opposition into the discussion, (i) may have the benefactive readings glossed as (ii) and (iii),

(i) Iniampas ng bata ang sinturon sa mesa.

(ii) The boy hit the table for the belt.

(iii) The boy hit (X) for the belt on the table.

and two dative readings. Of course the absurdity of the benefactive readings vanishes if the head noun of the ang-phrase in (i) is a noun that can semantically be the benefactor of the action or event, as in (iv).

(iv) Iniampas ng bata ang matanda sa mesa.
old man

where the benefactive-dative opposition is clear. The semantic element involved here may simply be the feature [+animate]; that is, if the N is animate the benefactive reading is recognized.

in the upper case, signifying that they are major nodes. The slanting line is a major node boundary. The head of an arrow points to the node to which the node where the arrow originates is associated; the former is called the target node, and the latter the associating node. Two arrows emanating from a node mean a case conflict. Thus, in (29) the sa-phrase is ambiguous as to whether it is a noun locative or a goal case, and the ng-phrase may be either in the agentive case or genitive case. Notice that association with the major node V, a verb case relationship, is preserved irrespective of the number of nodes that intervene between the target node and the associating node. This is not true in a noun case relationship, as we shall see. But first, notice that the genitive meaning of ng associates with S, and that the noun locative meaning of sa associates with ng, i.e., schematically,

$$(30) \text{ ng}_G \rightarrow S$$

$$(31) \text{ sa}_{nl} \rightarrow ng$$

$$(32) \text{ ng}_A \rightarrow V$$

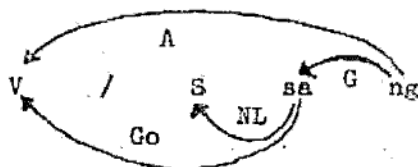
$$(33) \text{ sa}_{Go} \rightarrow V$$

where the general form of a level of case association pattern is $x_i \rightarrow y$ (read x with the function, or meaning, i associates with y, and x and y are nodes).¹¹ (32) and (33) complete the case association

¹¹As the context of the paper suggests, the symbol ' \rightarrow ' does not refer to the replacement symbol conventional in TG. It is intended to be read as 'associates with'. It will be noted that a case association pattern is a level by level schematization of a corresponding case association diagram. The introduction of CAP is necessary to allow reference in the text to a particular level of case association.

pattern of (29). We shall compare this pattern with that of (34).

$$(34) \text{ Inihampas ang sinturon sa mesa ng bata.}$$



In (34), the same agentive-genitive and noun locative-goal case oppositions are involved. But a change of the order of the sa- and ng-phrases changes the case association pattern with respect to the noun cases but not with respect to the verb cases. The case association pattern of (34) is :

ng_G → sa

ng_A → V

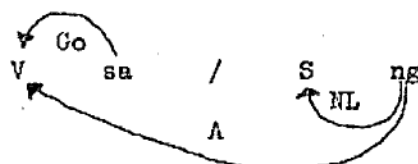
sa_{NL} → S

sa_{Go} → V

This observation complements the conclusion reached in the discussion in Part 2 of ways of disambiguating case oppositions. A verb case relationship is not affected by constituent reordering, the case relationship is preserved no matter where the associating nodes are positioned; hence, a verb case opposition cannot be resolved by constituent reordering. On the other hand, a noun case relationship is dependent on the position of the nodes involved, and a change in the order of constituents signals a change of the target node.

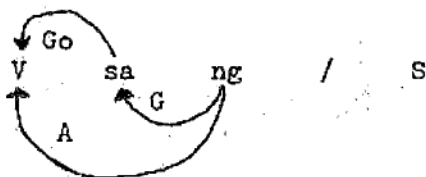
Suppose, now, we wish to make clear the noun case function of a particular NP. Constituent reordering requires that the NP be adjoined to the node with which it is to be associated. To illustrate, let us attempt to disambiguate the sa-phrase in (29). First, we move the phrase one node to the left--the result is (34). And in (34), as noted, sa still exhibits the goal-NL opposition, although this time the target node for the NL function is not any more the ng-phrase but S. Next, we move sa another node to the left, and we get (35).

(35) Inihampas sa mesa ang sinturon ng bata.



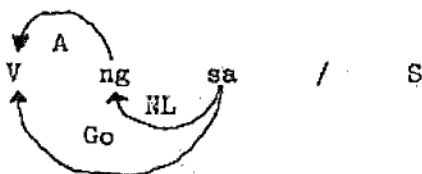
This time sa is fully disambiguated and it carries the goal case function. It should be clear how this method of disambiguation works. The adjunction eliminates all but one node to the left of the phrase being disambiguated, and hence, leaves no doubt as to the node to which it is to be associated with, in this case, the node V. However, note that ng in (35) is still ambiguous. Suppose we wish to disambiguate the whole sentence. We might proceed next as follows. To eliminate ng_G → S in (35), we move the phrase from the subject side to the predicate side, and we get (36).

(36) Inihampas sa mesa ng bata ang sinturon.



But ng in (36) is still ambiguous, exhibiting the same case conflict as in (35), although this time the head noun of the genitive function is sa. Now we move ng one node to the left, and we get (37). In (37), ng is fully disambiguated and is in the agentive.

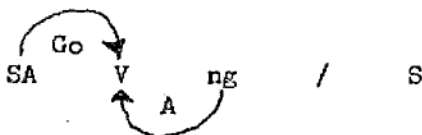
(37) Inihampas ng bata sa mesa ang sinturon.



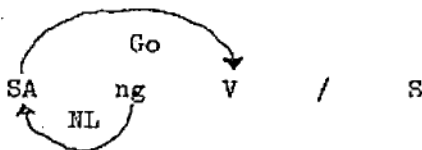
This is fine, but moving ng immediately to the right of V pushes sa one node to the right--the result is that sa becomes ambiguous once again. Thus, the whole sentence has not been disambiguated.

It seems that herein lies a real dilemma. Because of the natural limitation imposed by a linear ordering of surface constituents, there can only be one node immediately to the right, or left, of a particular node. How then is the ambiguity of a V NP NP structure resolved? A solution is to move one of the NPs to the left of the V node. And this is precisely what happens in Tagalog. One of the NPs, the sa-phrase, is 'promoted' as a major node, is adjoined to the left of V, and, together with whatever modifier it may have, is optionally marked off from the rest of the predicate by the boundary marker ay. This is shown in (38) and (39).

(38) sa mesa (ay) inihampas ng bata ang sinturon.



(39) Sa mesa ng bata (ay) inihampas ang sinturon.



The promotion potentiality of a NP seems to be a function of its marker. A sa-phrase may be promoted, but not a ng-phrase. Other NPs may be treated similarly. This property of a NP marker we shall call directionality. Thus, sa is an ambi-directional marker since it can make a left connection or a right connection, or both at the same time. Ng is a left-directional marker. What is interesting to note is that a promoted NP loses its capacity for multiple case functioning. Like the NP promoted as the subject of the sentence, sa when promoted can only make a case connection with the verb of the sentence. In (38) and (39) sa lost its potentiality to be interpreted as a noun case. Since this is so, it follows that a VV case opposition involving the sa-phrase marker cannot be resolved by moving the sa-phrase to a pre-verbal position, as (40) shows

(40) Sa duyan nahulog ang bata.

Where sa duyan is still either goal or source.

Part 4

In any discussion of opposition, the matter of blocking and, complementarily, of attraction normally becomes a part. Indeed, in case opposition, we can profitably discuss the concepts of case blocking and case attraction. In fact, the postulation of such concepts is necessary to answer a number of questions dealing mainly on the matter of the choice of target nodes. We might ask the very general question, why does node X associate with node Y and not with node Z?

To answer this question, we shall first state concisely the case association rule, as follows: In a normally ordered string of constituents, the constituent to the right associates primarily but not solely with the constituent immediately to its left, the extent and strength of connection(s) subject to the forces of attraction and blocking.¹² Attraction and blocking are governed by two rules:

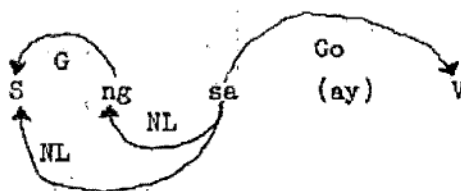
¹²This is a very tentative rule, as it does not cover the right-directing property of certain NP markers. The reason for this non-inclusion is obvious: the rule has the restriction that the strings be normally ordered. A sentence with a right-directing NP has the inversion marker ay inserted, and we define inversion to operate not only on major nodes but also on nodes within a node.

the rule of proximity and the rule of node hierarchy. That is, (i) the closer the associating nodes are to one another, the stronger the connection is likely to be, and (ii) the higher the position of a node in the node hierarchy, the stronger is its attraction power on an associating node. In the node hierarchy, V occupies the

highest position, followed by S and any other node that may be promoted, then the other noun phrase nodes.

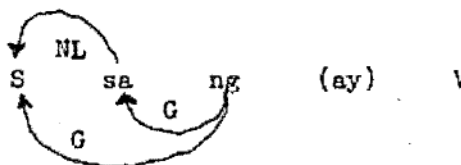
In (29) sa associates with ng because of the rule of proximity and with V because V is in the highest rung of the hierarchy. The NP sa does not make a connection with the NP S because it is blocked by the NP ng and attracted by the node V. The NP S, although a major node, does not exert as much force as the other major node V, since S in itself is an NP. In (41), notice that sa makes a connection with the NP S.

(41) Ang sinturon ng bata sa mesa ay inihampas.



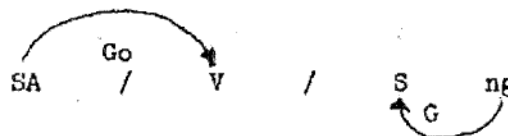
The NP ng exerts blocking effects, but the NP S, being a major node, exerts a pull strong enough--but not as strong a pull as V exerts--to create only a minor ambiguity. Sa, an ambi-directional marker, makes a right connection with the node V, but because of a major node boundary, ay, the ambiguity is minor. Between the two minor ambiguities in (41), i.e., $sa_{NL} \rightarrow S$ and $sa_{Go} \rightarrow V$, the latter is more likely to be seen, an indication that a verb node has more attraction power than a NP node. In (42)

(42) Ang sinturon sa mesa ng bata ay inihampas.

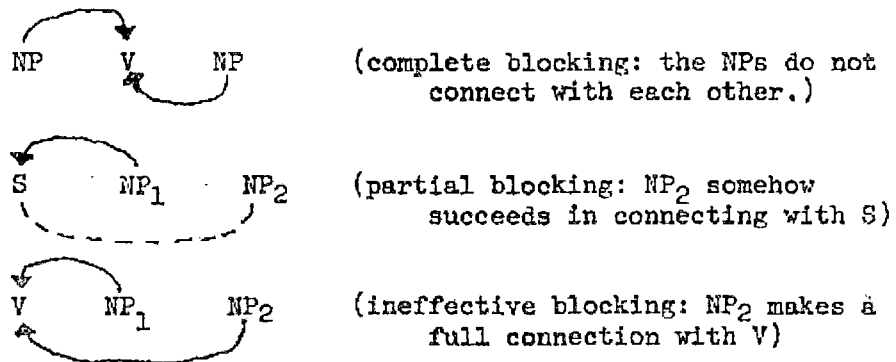


ng does not make a connection with V because ng is a left-directional marker. In (43) ng does not connect with sa because S and V block it, and sa, blocked by V, does not connect with S.

(43) Sa mesa inihampas ang sinturon ng bata.



This is an example of complete blocking. Blocking behavior may be schematically illustrated as follows:



It follows that the degree of ambiguity of a construction depends on the type of blocking involved. In a complete blocking, no ambiguity occurs. Partial blocking results in a type of ambiguity that may be hard to discern and may not even be regarded as ambiguous by some speakers. When blocking is ineffective, ambiguities are clear cut.

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